

RAPID AMERICANS.

An English Critic on Our Barber Shops and Rocking Chairs.

I cannot find that quickness is an American characteristic. What is mistaken for quickness is a kind of nervous fidgets, for the American is infinitely restless and nervous. It is shown in his passion for doing many things at once. The barber shop, a thing characteristically American, affords a wonderful example of this substitution of restlessness and circumstance for real rapidity and economy of time. The business man, still in his dramatic character of a locomotive pressed for time, hurries into the barber shop and extends himself in a chair, feet and hands outspread, a bootblack engaged on each boot, a manicurist on each hand and the barber himself operating on his head. But such are the seductions of the barber shop that he probably spends twenty minutes or half an hour there, as against the Englishman's four or five minutes.

It is time simply wasted, from a business point of view; that is to say, it is spent in sheer luxury. For the Americans, being among the cleanest people in the world, have a Roman sense of luxury in everything that appertains to washing and care of the body; and their lavatories and barber shops are like temples raised to some goddess of health and cleanliness. And, finally, it was America that invented that triumph in the achievement of two opposite things at once—the rocking chair. So restless is the American that even when he is resting he wants to be moving, and consequently he has achieved this infernal engine, the rocking chair, in which (when he is obliged to remain in one place for a time) he can indulge in a continuous movement which yet does not advance him an inch. He can thus be busy even while he is at rest.—Filson Young in English Review.

ANIMALS WITH HANDS.

Kangaroos Are Fond of Using Their Fore Feet in Feeding.

Kangaroos use their hands very readily to hold food in and to put it into their mouths. As their fore legs are so short, that they have to browse in a stooping position, they seem pleased when able to secure a large bunch of cabbage or other vegetable provender and to hold it in their hands to eat. Sometimes the young kangaroo, looking out of its mother's pouch, catches one or two of the leaves which the old one drops, and the pair may be seen each nibbling at the salad held in their hands, one, so to speak, "one floor" above the other.

The slow, deliberate clasp and unclasping of a chameleon's feet look like the movements which the hands of a sleep walker might make were he trying to creep downstairs. The chameleon's are almost deformed hands, yet they have a superficial resemblance to the feet of parrots, which more than other birds use their feet for many of the purposes of a hand when feeding. To see many of the smaller rodents—ground squirrels, prairie dogs and muskrats—hold food, usually to both paws, is to learn a lesson in the dextrous use of hands without thumbs.

Nothing more readily suggests the momentary impression that a pretty little monkey is "a man and a brother" than when he stretches out his neat little palm, fingers and thumb and, with all the movements proper to the civilized mode of greeting, insists on shaking hands.—London Graphic.

The Trustful Aviator.

"Modern politics and an English clergyman, who is visiting this country, this worse than modern business. You here in the States are so used to political corruption that you joke about it. I heard a joke about it on the boat coming over. An aviator—the joke ran—descended in a field and said to a rather well dressed individual: 'Here, mind my machine a minute, will you?'

"What? the well dressed individual snarled. 'Me mind your machine? Why, I'm a United States senator!'

"Well, what of it?" said the aviator. 'I'll trust you.'—Washington Star.

Think of It!

Two brothers, each of whom is nearly six feet and a half tall, were one day introduced by an acquaintance to a young lady. As she sat gazing up at the pair of giants in wonder and awe she exclaimed:

"Great heavens, suppose there had only been one of you!"—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Last Resort.

Matrimonial Agent—Yes, sir, I think we can suit you perfectly. Ah, our preliminary fee is 5 guineas. The client—Five guineas! My dear laddie, don't be farical. Why should I want to marry if I possessed all that money?—London Opinion.

Hard Work.

"I want you to understand that I got my money by hard work." "Why, I thought it was left you by your uncle." "So it was, but I had hard work getting it away from the lawyers."—Boston Transcript.

Complimentary.

Maud—Miss Olden thinks that hotel clerk just lovely. Ethel—Why so? Maud—He wrote opposite her name on the hotel register, "Suite 16."—Boston Transcript.

Supply and Demand.

The Wife—Big checks for dresses will not be in demand this season. The Husband—Thank heaven!—Baltimore American.



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The Giraffe.

Every one who has seen the giraffe must have noticed the great size and beauty of its soft, black eyes. They have a gentle yet fearless expression, and their prominence enables the animal to see almost behind it, so as to guard against an enemy attacking it while feeding. In walking the giraffe does not move its legs like a horse, ox and most other quadrupeds, but moves both the fore and hind legs of the same side at once, like the elephant and camel.

Doing His Best.

"Mamma, the Smiths live in the town where we"—
"I think I should use the word 'reside', Tommy."
"Well, they reside in the town where we reside before we moved here, don't they?"—Chicago Tribune.

The Rifle Fish.

Writing to the Travelers' Gazette from Queensland about the strange forms of animal life in that country, which include the web foot duck, which lays eggs and suckles its young, the "lung fish" and the "walking perch," a correspondent gives a description of the rifle fish, which when full grown measures about ten inches and weighs about one and a half pounds. It subsists on food which it shoots—hence the name. It swims leisurely about the stream a few inches below the surface and is always on the look-out for flies and other insects that settle on the floating surface of water plants. On getting close enough to its victim it discharges a tiny jet or ball of water, which, if shot straight, knocks the fly into the stream, where it is instantly gathered in by the shooter.

NATURAL SINGERS.

Negroes Possess the Harmonic Ear, a Distinct Musical Gift.

"The American negroes possess what has been called the 'harmonic ear,'" writes Natalie Curtis in the Craftsman. "Though utterly without training, the negroes improvise alto, tenor and bass parts to their songs with entire ease, and a whole negro chorus will spontaneously break into harmony of real interest to the musician as well as of beauty."

"In the tobacco factories of the south and in the fields I have heard ignorant negroes who seemed nearly related to their primitive African progenitors sing four part harmony of a richness and charm truly amazing. This harmonic talent of the negroes is strikingly in evidence at Hampton institute, the industrial school for negroes and Indians in Virginia. There a chorus of 800 negro students sings without accompaniment and in faultless pitch throughout an evening, chanting in the untaught harmonies peculiar to the negro the old plantation songs of the past generation. It is safe to say that Hampton has done more than any other single influence to keep extant the negro music in its purity."

"Once when I was visiting Hampton there was present a musician from Europe. He asked me who trained the chorus. I said: 'Nobody, the negroes. Their singing is natural.' He said: 'I don't mean who trains their voices or teaches them tone production. I mean who teaches them their parts and trains them to sing together.' I repeated, 'Nobody.' He said: 'That is not possible. I have never heard finer choral singing.' I said, 'If you do not believe me ask Major Moton, the negro leader who starts the chorus in each song.' Major Moton answered as I did. The musician was amazed. 'How do you do it?' he asked. The negro answered, 'I don't know how we do it—we just sing, that's all.' And we agreed that a people who could 'just sing' as these did and improvise harmonies of such simple and natural beauty certainly possess a distinct musical gift, probably capable of rare development."

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Lost Fortune by Will's Flaw

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Because of this neglect the entire estate has now to be divided among fifty heirs.

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